



A HISTORY OF BRITAIN

# The Middle Ages





## A HISTORY OF BRITAIN

### *Acknowledgments:*

The author and publishers would like to acknowledge the use of additional illustrative material as follows:

Page 37: Aerofilms Ltd; pages 16, 40 (top left and centre right): Bodleian Library, Oxford; page 24: Janet and Colin Bord; cover and pages 19, 51 (top): Britain on View (BTA/ETB); pages 40 (bottom left), 49 (top), 50: British Library; page 25: The Syndics of Cambridge University Library; page 28: The Cathedral Shop, Canterbury; page 15: by courtesy of the Rt. Hon. Viscount de l'Isle, VC, KG; cover and page 23 (top): Essex County Council (photographer – Peter Rogers); page 13 (bottom): Robert Harding Picture Library; page 23 (bottom): S. G. Harrison; page 43 (2): The Mansell Collection; drawings on pages 7, 42 (centre right): Anne Matthews; pages 13 (top), 21: Museum of London; page 33: Royal Armouries Board of Trustees; page 12: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England; cover photographs (2) and pages 27, 51 (bottom): by courtesy of His Grace the Duke of Rutland CBE; page 32 and endpaper decoration: Warwick Castle.

Designed by Chris Reed.

Ladybird books are widely available, but in case of difficulty may be ordered by post or telephone from:

Ladybird Books – Cash Sales Department  
Littlegate Road Paignton Devon TQ3 3BE  
Telephone 0803 554761

A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library

Published by Ladybird Books Ltd Loughborough Leicestershire UK  
Ladybird Books Inc Auburn Maine 04210 USA

© LADYBIRD BOOKS LTD 1990 This edition 1994

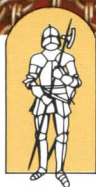
LADYBIRD and the device of a Ladybird are trademarks of Ladybird Books Ltd

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any  
means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise,  
without the prior consent of the copyright owner.*

## Contents

|   | page  |
|---|-------|
| The Middle Ages – time chart                  | 4     |
| People at the beginning of<br>the Middle Ages | 6     |
| The manor                                     | 8     |
| Working on the land                           | 10    |
| The peasant's house                           | 12    |
| Food  | 14    |
| A banquet                                     | 16    |
| Going on a journey                            | 18    |
| Towns   | 20    |
| The guilds                                    | 22    |
| Fairs   | 24    |
| Monasteries                                   | 26    |
| Pilgrims                                      | 28    |
| Sport   | 30    |
| Knights                                       | 32    |
| Tournaments                                   | 34    |
| Castles                                       | 36    |
| The Hundred Years' War                        | 38    |
| Medicine                                      | 40    |
| The Black Death                               | 42    |
| The Peasants' Revolt                          | 44    |
| What people wore                              | 46    |
| People at the end of the Middle Ages          | 48    |
| How we know                                   | 50    |
| The legacy of the Middle Ages                 | 52    |
| Glossary/Index                                | 54/55 |
| Places to visit                               | 56    |





# The Middle Ages



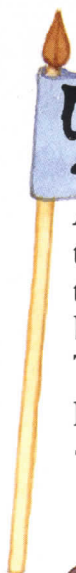
by TIM WOOD

illustrations by JOHN DILLOW

Series Consultants: School of History  
University of Bristol

Ladybird





## he Middle Ages

This book covers a period of over two hundred years, from 1272 – 1485, a time known as the **Late Middle Ages**, or **Late Medieval Period**. It was a time of violence and wars, as kings struggled to control the powerful *barons*, and the barons fought one another for more land. The wars often brought death, famine and plague to the troubled countryside.

### The Middle Ages – time chart

| Date | Kings and people   | What happened  |
|------|--|--|
| 1250 | Edward I 1272-1307   | Conquest of Wales.<br>War in Scotland  |
| 1300 | Edward II 1307-1327<br>Robert the Bruce  | Uprising in Scotland.<br>Robert is proclaimed<br>King of Scotland. Wins<br>Battle of Bannockburn<br>1314 |
|      | Edward III 1327-1377   | Hundred Years' War<br>began between England<br>and France 1337   |
|      | Black Prince (Edward III's<br>eldest son)  | Battle of Crécy 1346   |
|      |  | Black Death plague 1348.<br>Growth of the wool trade   |
| 1350 | Richard II 1377-1399<br>(Grandson of Edward III,<br>son of the Black Prince)             | Chaucer b.1345 d.1400.<br>Wrote <i>THE CANTERBURY<br/>TALES</i> in the 1380s                             |
|      | Wat Tyler<br>John Ball<br>John Wyclif  | Peasants' Revolt 1381  |
|      | Henry IV 1399-1413<br>(Cousin of Richard II.<br>Forced Richard to give up<br>the throne) | First complete translation<br>of Bible into English 1382   |
|      |  | Barons grew powerful   |





**Date**

**Kings and people**

**What happened**

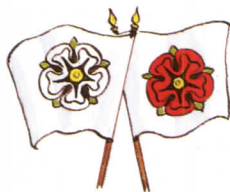
1400

War with France. Battle of Agincourt 1415

Henry V 1413-1422  
(Son of Henry IV)

Henry VI 1422-1461  
(Son of Henry V)  
Joan of Arc

1450



Henry marries Margaret of Anjou 1445

Hundred Years' War ends 1453. Loss of French lands

Wars of the Roses begins 1455, between the Lancastrians (Henry VI) and the Yorkists (Richard, Duke of York)

Edward IV 1461-1483  
(Cousin of Henry VI)

Triumph of the Yorkists

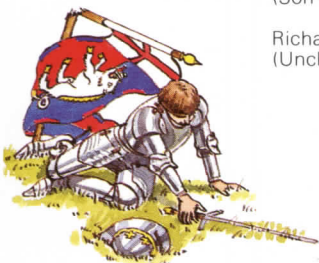


England's first printed book 1477 – printed by William Caxton. Produced nearly 100 titles up to his death in 1491

Edward V 1483  
(Son of Edward IV)

Richard III 1483-1485  
(Uncle of Edward V)

Battle of Bosworth 1485. Last Plantagenet, Richard III, died. The throne passed to the House of Tudor



## People at the beginning of the Middle Ages

Most of the people living at this time were very poor. The real power lay in the hands of the king and a few very powerful landowners.



EDWARD II  
murdered



RICHARD II  
murdered



HENRY VI  
murdered



EDWARD V  
murdered

**THE KING:** During the Middle Ages ten different kings ruled England with the help of the barons. If a king was weak, the barons turned against him and tried to seize power themselves. Four kings were murdered and three came to the throne by violence.

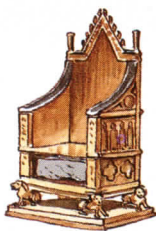
The most successful kings were usually the best fighters. They could control the barons, and so were able to raise enough money to run the kingdom well.



EDWARD III  
by violence



HENRY IV  
by violence



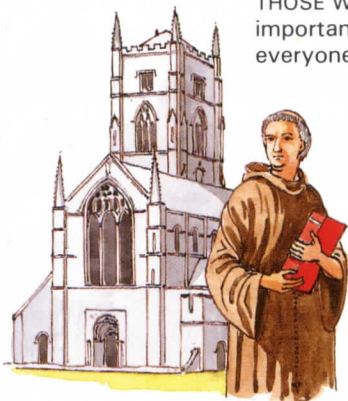
RICHARD III  
by violence



**THOSE WHO FOUGHT:** The barons owned huge areas of land. They built castles to protect their lands and many had their own soldiers.



**THOSE WHO PRAYED:** Religion was very important to medieval people, so everyone went to church sometimes several times a week. There were many large monasteries, where monks spent their lives working and praying.



During the Middle Ages, the church became rich and powerful. Church leaders were often advisers to the king and many monasteries became rich through the wool trade.

**THOSE WHO WORKED:** Most ordinary people were peasants or serfs. They had to live and work on land owned by the rich barons.

A drawing based on a medieval manuscript showing peasants at work



## The manor

Rabbit  
Warren

Dovecot

Fish Pool

Manor  
House

Common  
Land

Bailiff

Church

Smithy

West Field

In the Middle Ages almost everyone lived in a village like this. The baron (lord of the manor) owned all the land and most villagers were not allowed to leave it without his permission.

The lord of the manor allowed the villagers to farm some of his land. In return they had to work for him during the week and pay him with crops and animals.

Most villages were surrounded by three huge fields which were divided by banks of earth into long, thin strips.



Forest

Each villager farmed some strips in each field, so the good and bad land was shared out fairly.

A lord probably owned several manors. He visited each in turn, taking his family, servants and most of his possessions with him. When the lord was away, the *bailiff* was left in charge.

North Field

Mill

Mill Pond

Common Land

lord of  
the manor

Villagers gathered wood, berries and nuts from the forest, and grazed their animals on the *common land*, which they shared. They had everything they needed except salt and iron, which they had to buy from the nearest town


South Field



## Working on the land

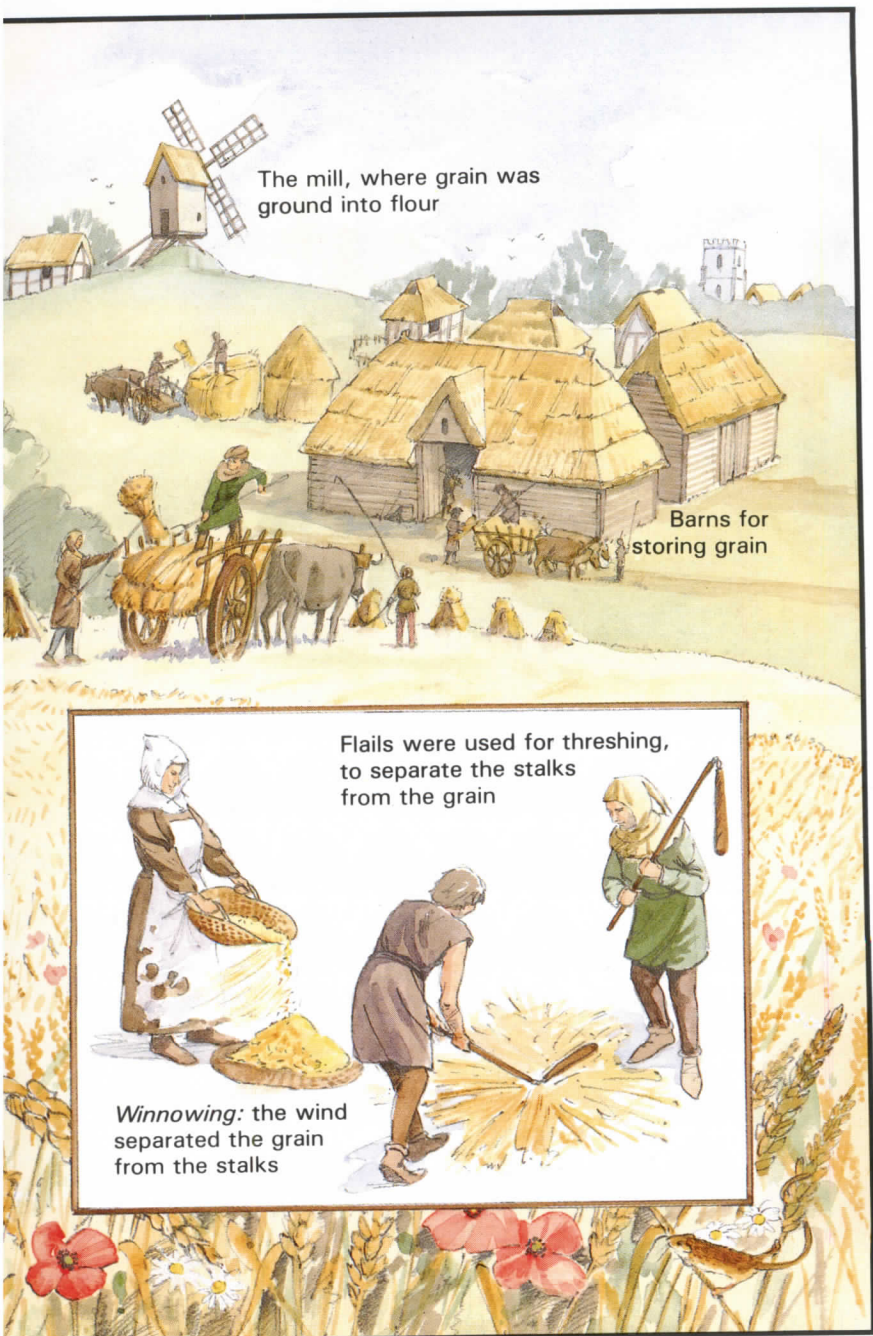
Every year the *reeve* and the villagers decided what to grow. One field was used as a pasture for animals. The second was sown with wheat (for bread) and the third with barley (for beer).

All the villagers helped, including the children. Most of the work was done by hand, although there were oxen to help to pull heavy loads or to plough.



The reeve was elected by the villagers, or appointed by the bailiff. He shared out the jobs in the village

Sickles were used to cut the wheat



The mill, where grain was ground into flour

Barns for storing grain

Flails were used for threshing, to separate the stalks from the grain

*Winnowing:* the wind separated the grain from the stalks

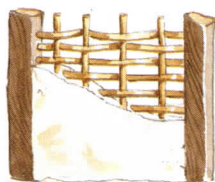
## The peasant's house

Peasants lived in wooden huts with roofs made of thatch. The family lived in one end, animals in the other. The huts were dirty, smelly and dark.

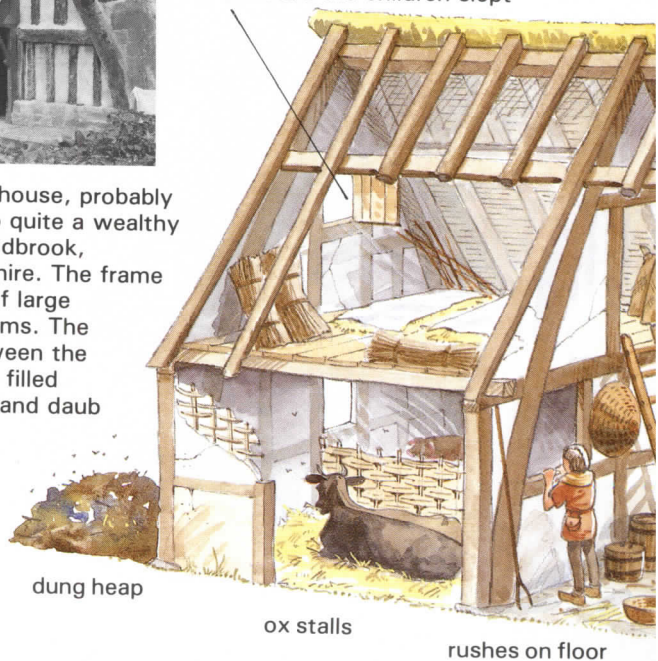


A medieval house, probably belonging to quite a wealthy family, at Didbrook, Gloucestershire. The frame was made of large wooden beams. The spaces between the beams were filled with wattle and daub

'Wattle' was woven twigs.  
'Daub' was mud plaster



Loft where the children slept



dung heap

ox stalls

rushes on floor



The main food for a peasant family was bread. Some peasants kept chickens, pigs and cows, for eggs, bacon and milk. Water was not clean, so often people drank beer. During a long winter many peasants went hungry and some starved.

Pottage, a thick soup, was sometimes made from beans, vegetables and herbs, perhaps with a scrap of meat thrown in. It was cooked in a *skillet*, which stood in the hot ashes

Smoke-hole plastered round with clay



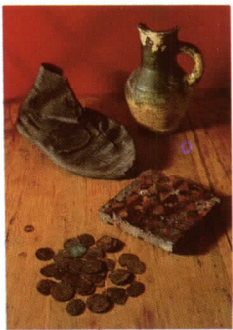
box bed

A medieval jug, leather shoe and coins, found in London



Bar for hanging clothes

Barrels for storing food





catching rabbits

## Food

The lord of the manor ate fresh food all year round. He kept doves and tame rabbits. He could hunt wild boar or stags in the forest, or go hawking.

Peasants were not allowed to hunt, and any caught doing so could be punished or even hanged.

stag hunting



hooded falcon



Falcons were trained to catch wild birds. Hoods kept them quiet while they sat on their owners' wrists





## Menu

| Meal             | Lords                                | Peasants               |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 6am<br>Breakfast | White bread<br>3-4 meat courses.     | Dark bread.<br>ale.    |
| 11am<br>Dinner   | Up to 12 dishes<br>Meat, fish, wine, | Bread,<br>cheese, ale. |
| 6pm<br>Supper    | Pies, cakes,<br>meat.                | Pottage, ale.          |
| 9pm<br>Livery    | Cakes, tarts,<br>spiced wine.        |                        |

The Great Hall, Penshurst Place, the biggest medieval hall in England. It was heated by an open fire in the middle of the floor and food was served through the doors which led to the kitchens behind the wooden screen



## A banquet

On feast days the lord of the manor held a banquet in the Great Hall of his manor house or castle. It could last up to five hours with as many as forty different dishes.

Minstrels sang and played in a gallery. Jesters, acrobats and tumblers entertained the feasters







## Going on a journey

In the Middle Ages, although most people never left their villages, some people had to travel.

Roads were just tracks, muddy in winter and very dusty in summer. People travelled in large groups for protection against outlaws.

Inns were usually  
dirty and  
overcrowded



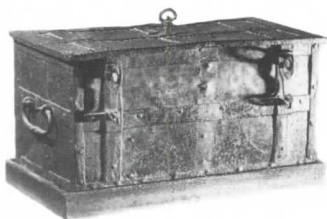
Pilgrims travelled to shrines, while government officials and nobles travelled on the king's business. A few peasants went to market, merchants travelled about buying and selling goods, and soldiers went off to war.







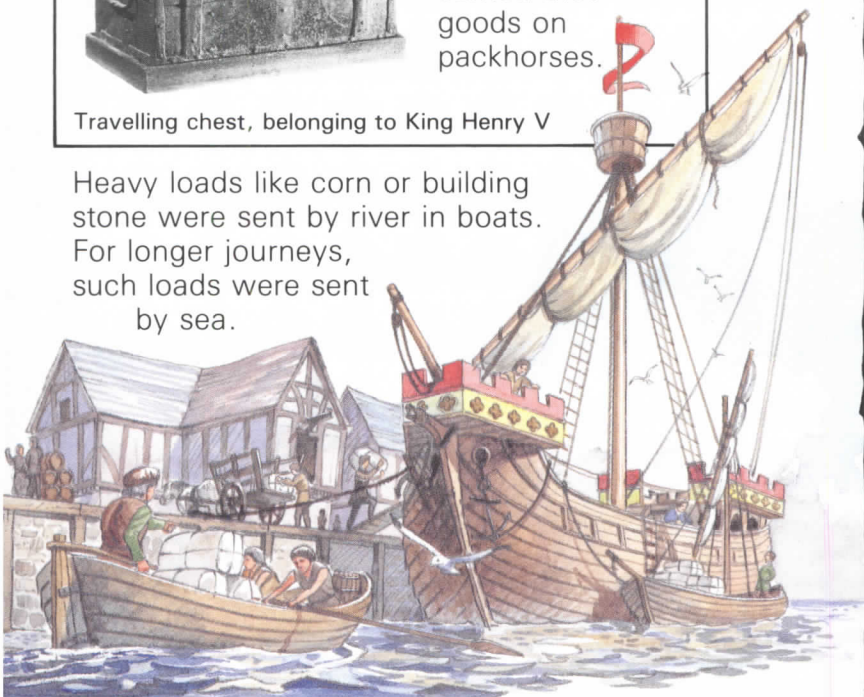
Carriages were not very comfortable, so rich people often travelled on horseback.



Ox carts were slow, so merchants mostly carried their goods on packhorses.

Travelling chest, belonging to King Henry V

Heavy loads like corn or building stone were sent by river in boats. For longer journeys, such loads were sent by sea.

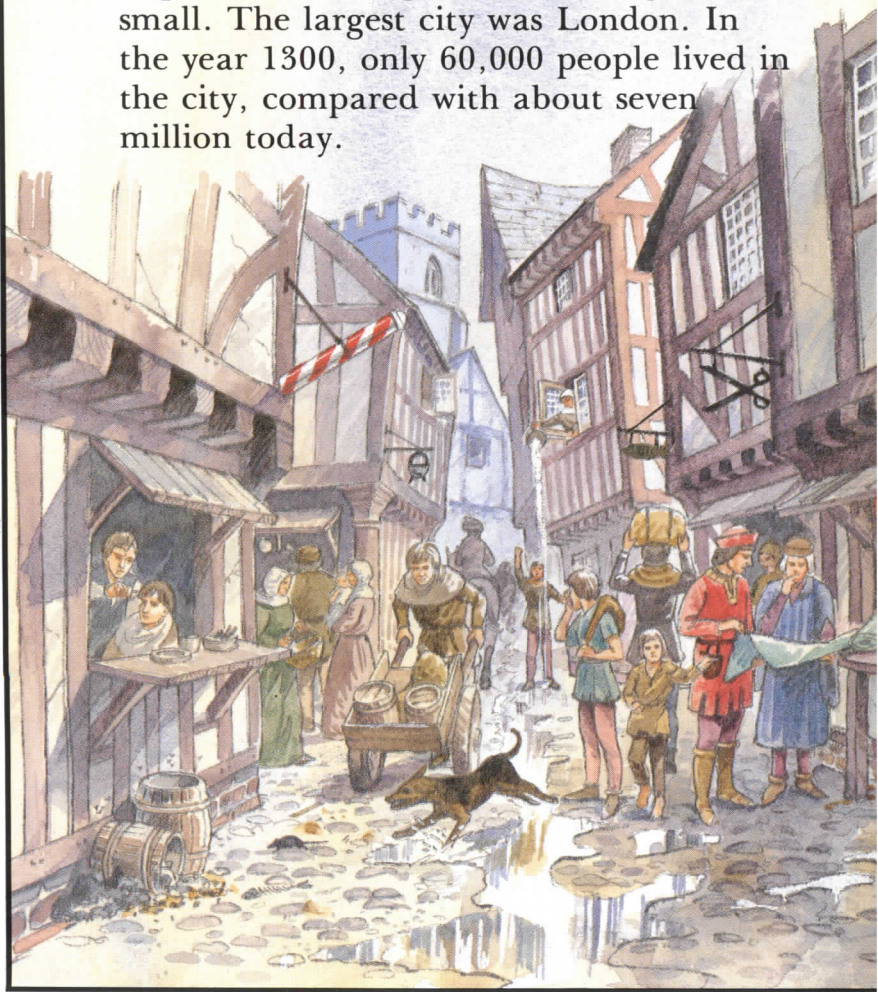


Wool being loaded onto a ship, to be sent abroad



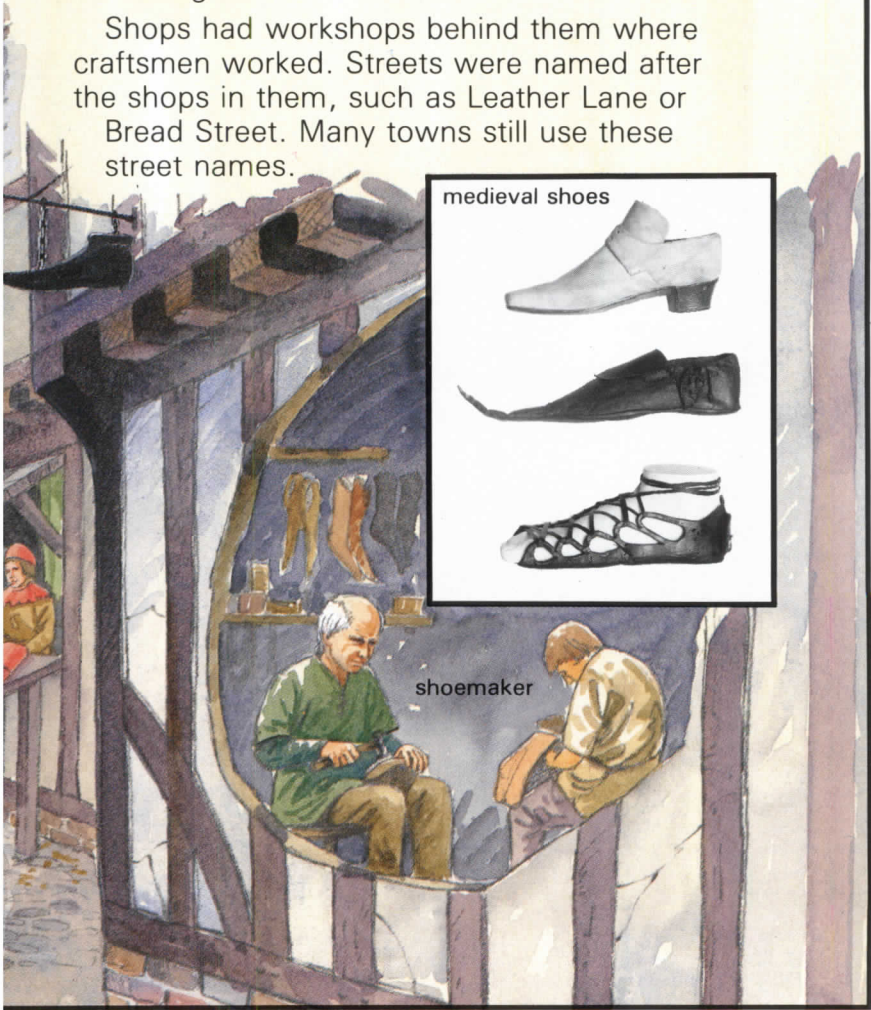
## Towns

Almost fifty seven million people live in Britain today. In the Middle Ages, the population was much smaller (three to six million). Towns, though they grew in importance during the Middle Ages, were small. The largest city was London. In the year 1300, only 60,000 people lived in the city, compared with about seven million today.



Fire was a great danger in the towns, where wooden houses and workshops were crammed close together. People threw their rubbish straight out of the windows so the narrow streets were dirty, smelly and often swarming with rats and flies.

Shops had workshops behind them where craftsmen worked. Streets were named after the shops in them, such as Leather Lane or Bread Street. Many towns still use these street names.



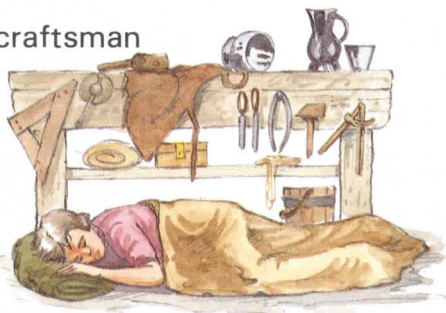


## The guilds

Guilds were clubs started by the most skilled of all the workers, the master craftsmen. Each trade had its own guild and only guild members were allowed to make and sell those goods in the town.

### Becoming a master craftsman

Parents paid the master craftsmen to train their children as *apprentices*. An apprentice slept in the workshop and was paid nothing.



He could not go to inns or get married. If he did not work hard, he was beaten. After seven years' training he became a *journeyman* and received his first pay.

Several years later the journeyman produced a *masterpiece* as a guild test. If it was good enough, he was taken into the guild and allowed to have his own shop.



A masterpiece



Thaxted guildhall

### WHAT THE GUILDS DID:

- 1 made sure that members did not work too many hours or charged too little;
- 2 gave money to members who were old or sick;
- 3 checked and tested that goods were well made;
- 4 made sure that members were not cheated.



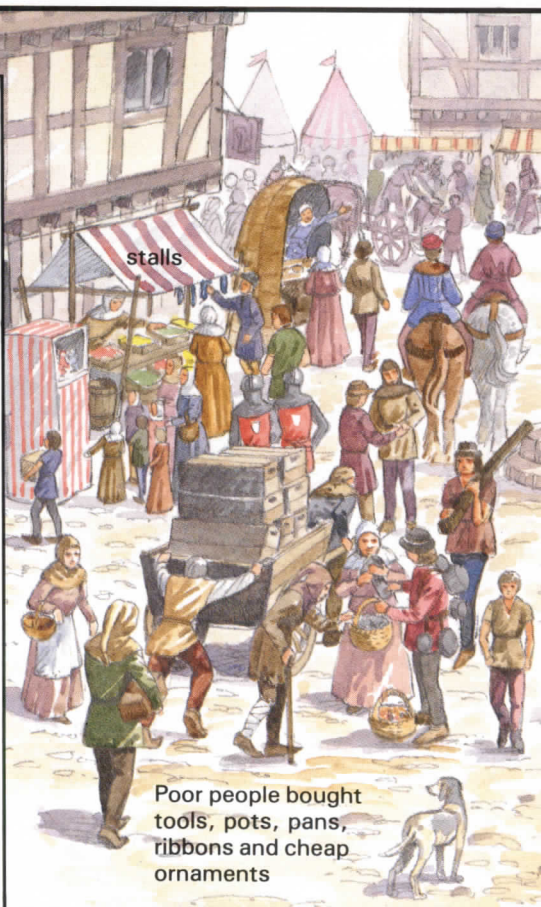
At festivals, guilds put on plays from the Bible, like this one, still performed in Chester.



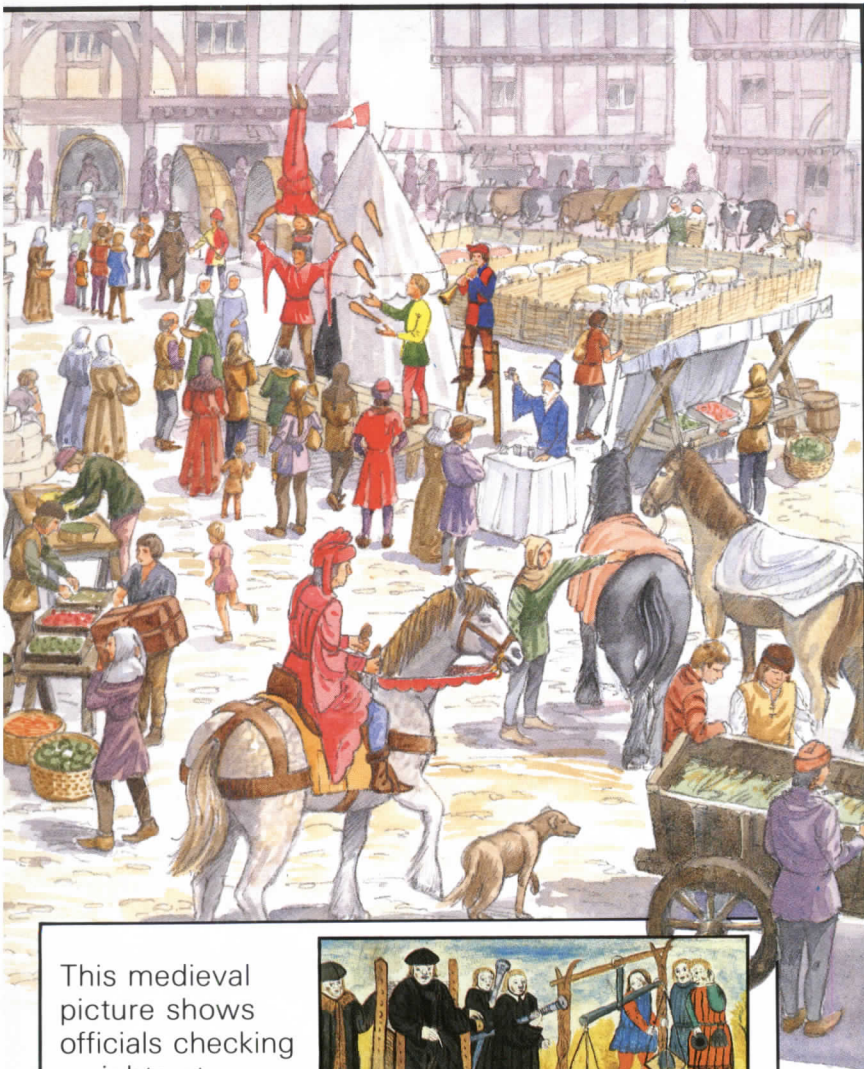
## Fairs

Fairs were held once a year in certain places, such as Boston in Lincolnshire and Winchester in Hampshire, and lasted several days. Merchants came from all over Europe bringing silks from China, wine from France, furs from Russia and weapons from Spain. People came long distances to dance, hear news, and watch clowns, jugglers and performing animals.

Cheats were put  
in the *stocks*  
(see right) or *pillory*







This medieval picture shows officials checking weights at Stourbridge Fair near Cambridge.



A special court called the *Pie Powder Court* sorted out any arguments on the spot.

## Monasteries

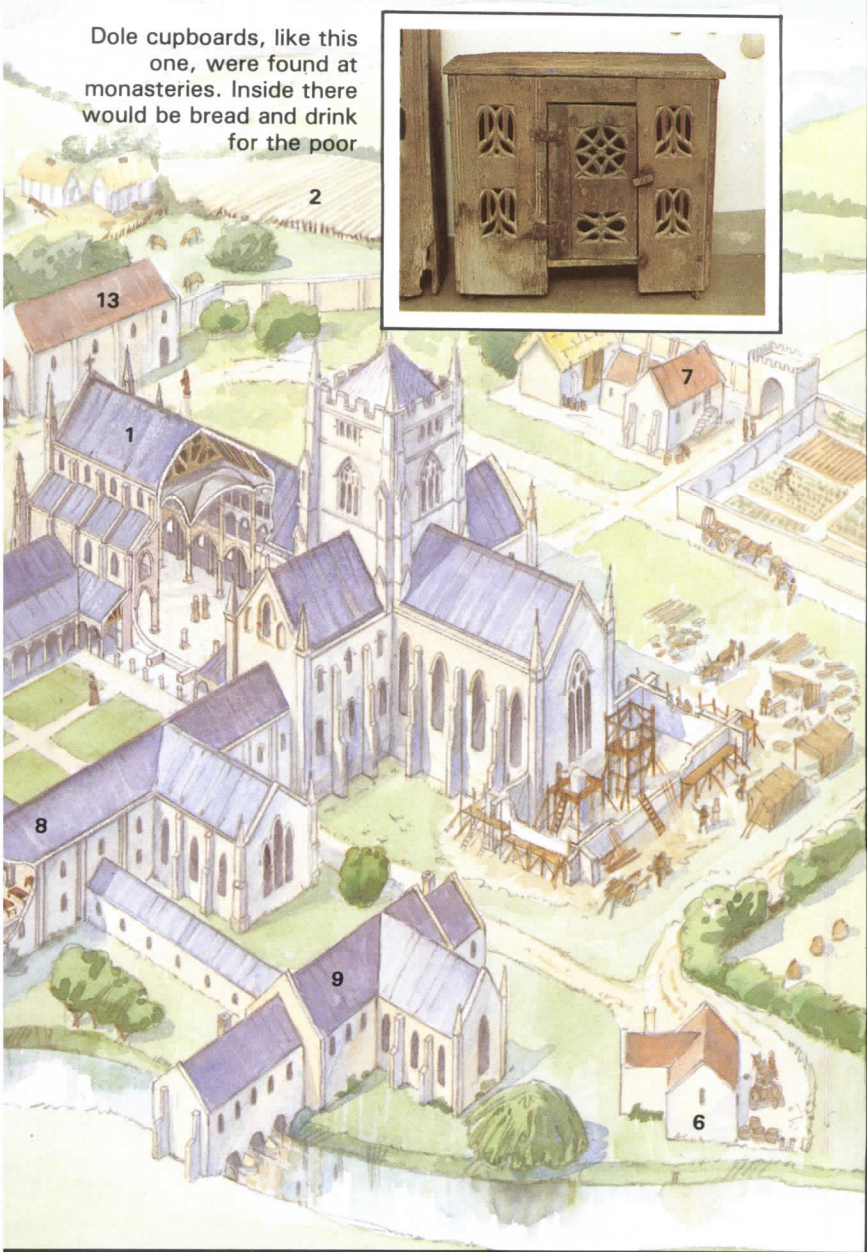
In the Middle Ages, monks and nuns spent their lives cut off from the rest of the world in monasteries or nunneries. Although they spent most of their time praying, many also farmed the land round the monasteries to feed themselves. They gave food and money to the needy, allowed travellers to stay free for two nights and ran hospitals for the poor.

### Key

- 1 church
- 2 farmland
- 3 kitchens
- 4 library
- 5 guesthouse
- 6 brewery
- 7 bakehouse
- 8 dormitory
- 9 hospital
- 10 Abbot's house
- 11 washrooms and toilets
- 12 refectory (dining room)
- 13 almonry (where the poor came for food)

Dole cupboards, like this one, were found at monasteries. Inside there would be bread and drink for the poor

2





## Pilgrims

In the Middle Ages people who had done something wrong and wanted to be

forgiven often went on a pilgrimage to pray at a shrine.

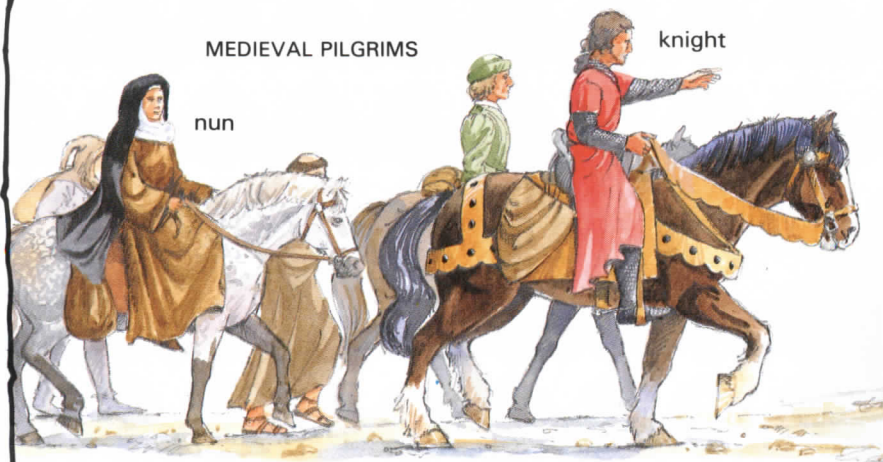
Some pilgrims went abroad to places like Assisi



Shrines are holy places, such as holy wells or the tombs of saints.

Canterbury and St Albans were popular shrines to visit. Here is an artist's drawing of pilgrims at Thomas Becket's tomb. Today a plaque marks the spot where the Archbishop was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170

### MEDIEVAL PILGRIMS

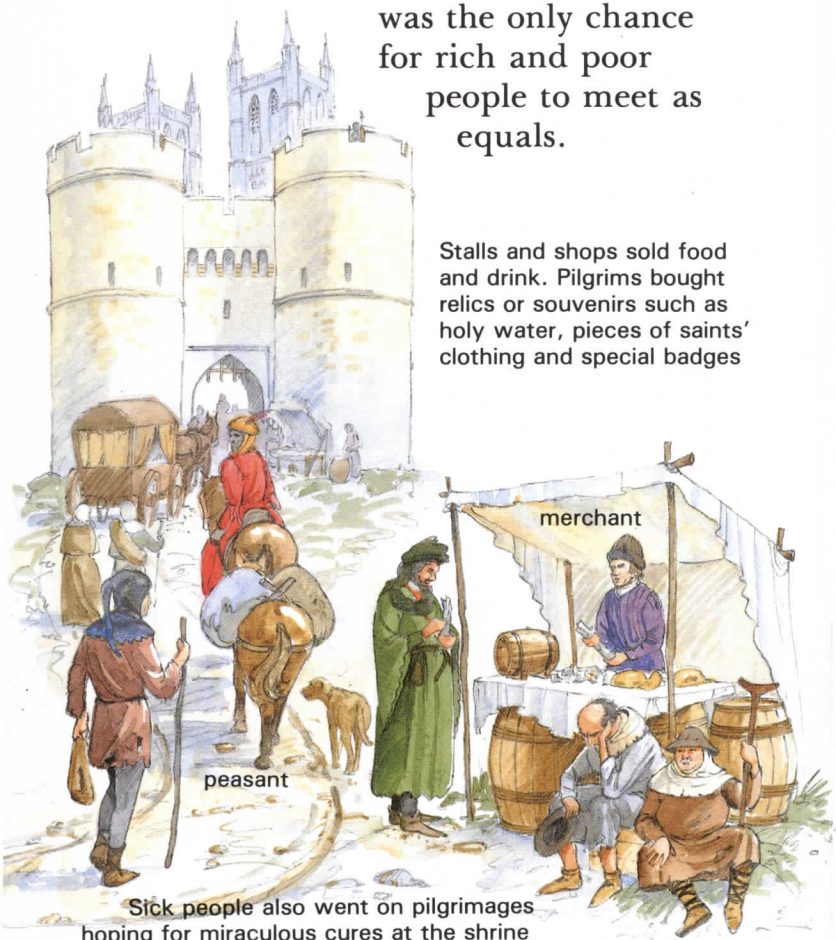


nun

knight

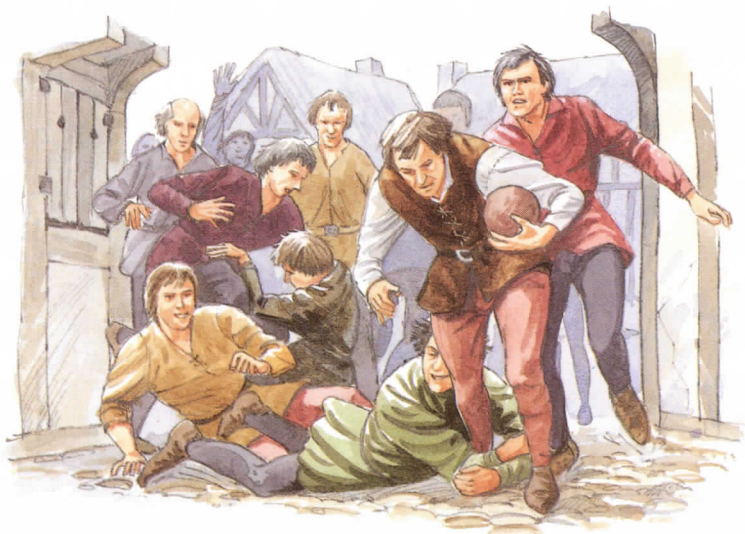
or Rome in Italy, or even as far as Jerusalem in the Holy Land. The journey was very exciting and sometimes dangerous, with strange places to visit and new people to meet. A pilgrimage was the only chance for rich and poor people to meet as equals.

Stalls and shops sold food and drink. Pilgrims bought relics or souvenirs such as holy water, pieces of saints' clothing and special badges



## Sport

Medieval people played many of the sports we play today, but the games were often more violent.



Football was played between all the men of two villages. The ball was a pig's bladder stuffed with peas, and the aim of the game was to carry it across the fields and place it on the market cross of the other village.

There were no rules, so players were often hurt and sometimes even killed. King Edward III banned the game because he thought that people were more interested in playing football than in practising their archery.



The most popular sports involved animals fighting and were often very cruel

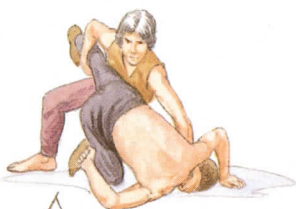


cock  
fighting

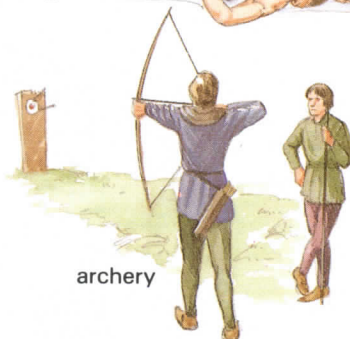


Bear baiting – a chained bear  
was attacked by dogs

Many sports were just fighting, like  
wrestling and  
shin kicking



quarter staffs



archery



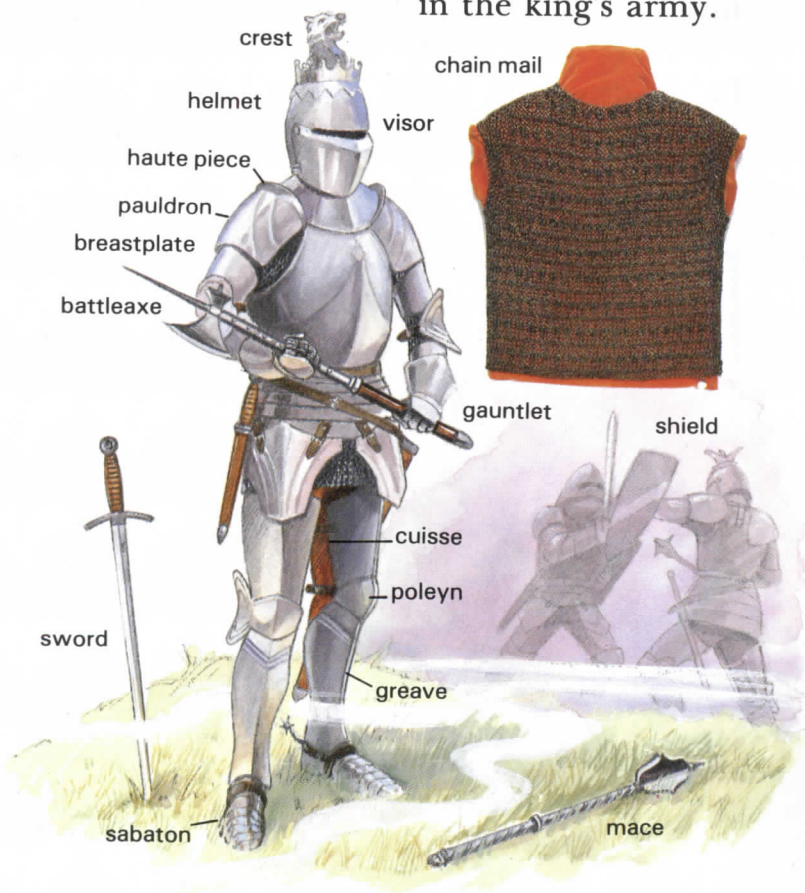
skittles



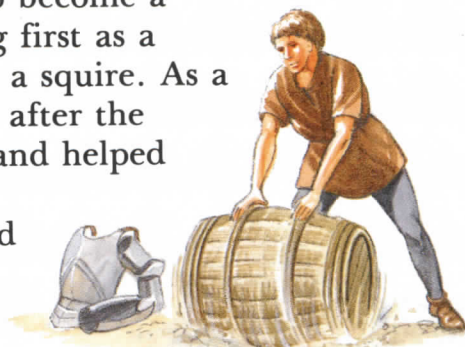
stoolball

## Knights

Knights were landowners who had been given land as a reward for fighting for the king or baron. Each knight used his own horse and weapons and could be asked to spend up to forty days each year serving in the king's army.



A boy from a wealthy family trained for up to ten years to become a knight, by serving first as a page and then as a squire. As a squire, he looked after the knight's armour and helped him to dress for battle. He learned how to ride and how to fight.



A squire cleans his knight's armour by rolling it in a barrel of sand



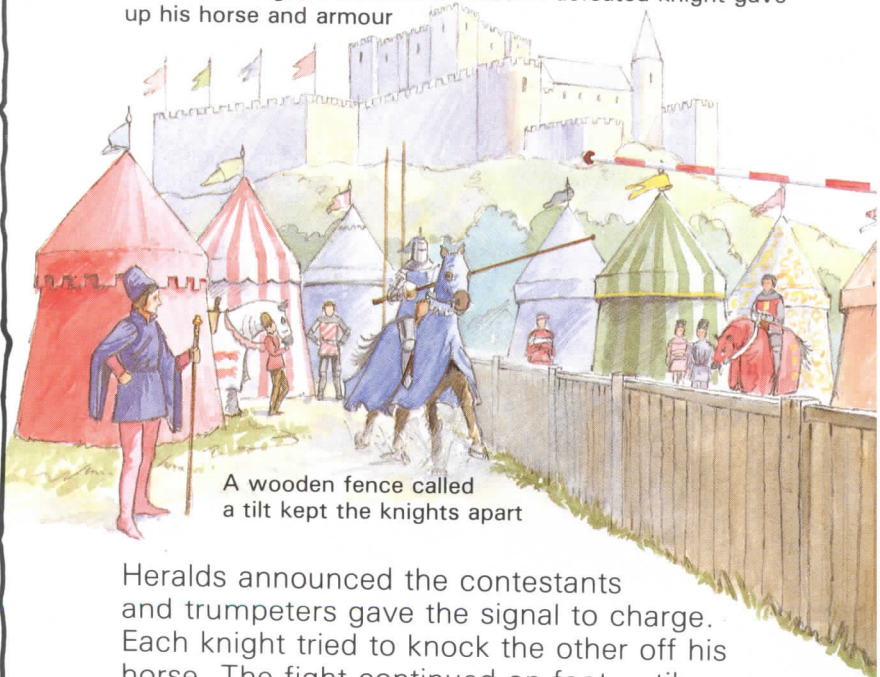
Prince Edward, Edward III's eldest son, won his spurs to become a knight at the Battle of Crécy. He was sixteen years old and became known as the Black Prince because of the colour of his jousting armour. Here, he wears the arms of England (lions) and France (lilies). His head is resting on his great helmet which bears his lion crest.



## Tournaments

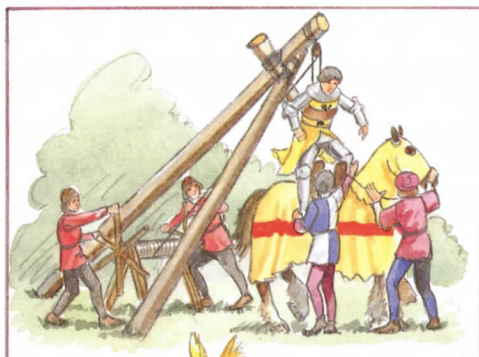
Tournaments were held so that knights could practise the art of fighting. Knights came from near and far to test their skills by *jousting* with one another. Crowds of people came to watch.

Each knight was allowed three lances. When three had been broken, the fight continued on foot. A defeated knight gave up his horse and armour.

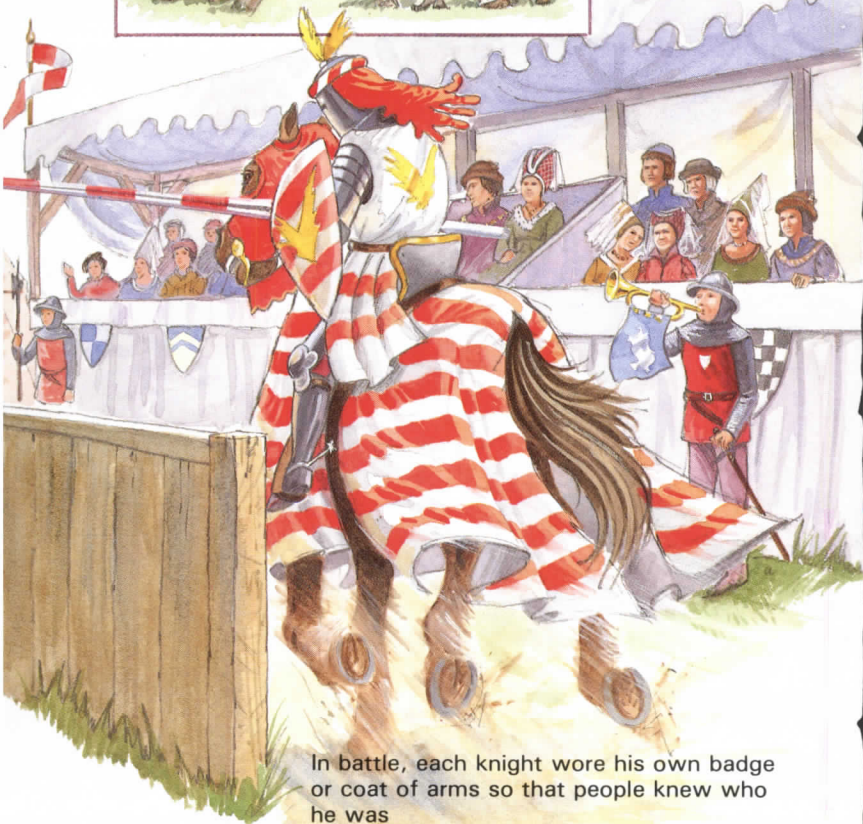


A wooden fence called a tilt kept the knights apart

Heralds announced the contestants and trumpeters gave the signal to charge. Each knight tried to knock the other off his horse. The fight continued on foot until one knight was beaten. Although they fought with blunted weapons, knights were often injured or killed.



Today some people believe that knights had to be hoisted onto their saddles. This actually never happened

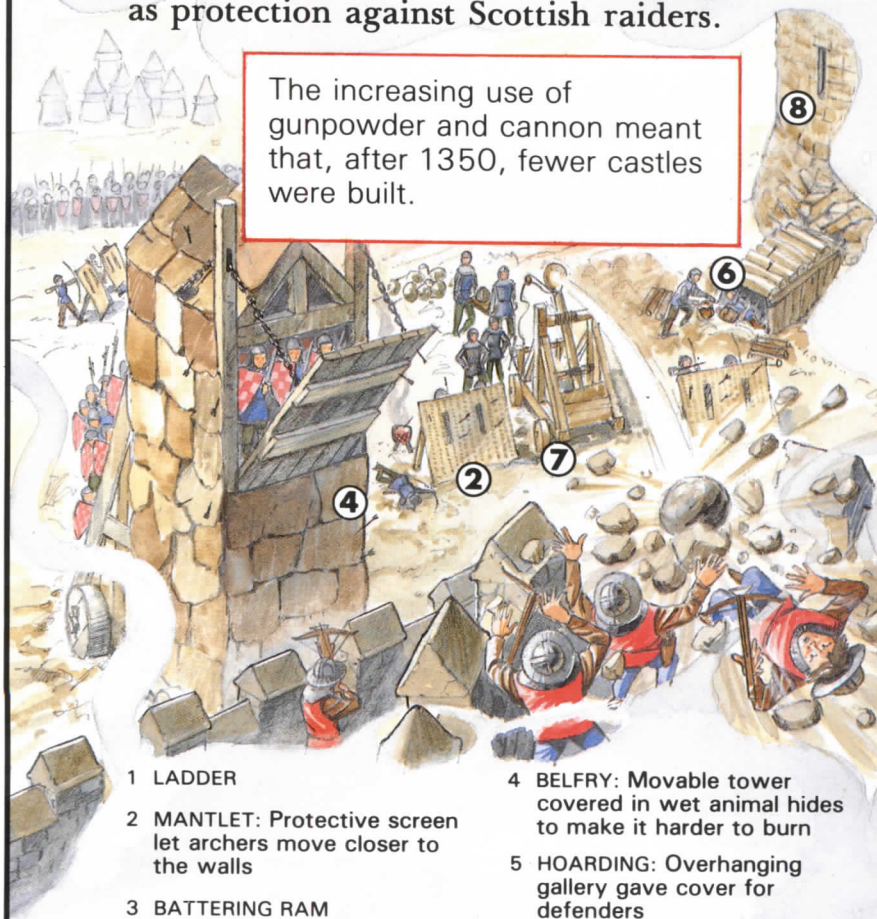


In battle, each knight wore his own badge or coat of arms so that people knew who he was

## Castles

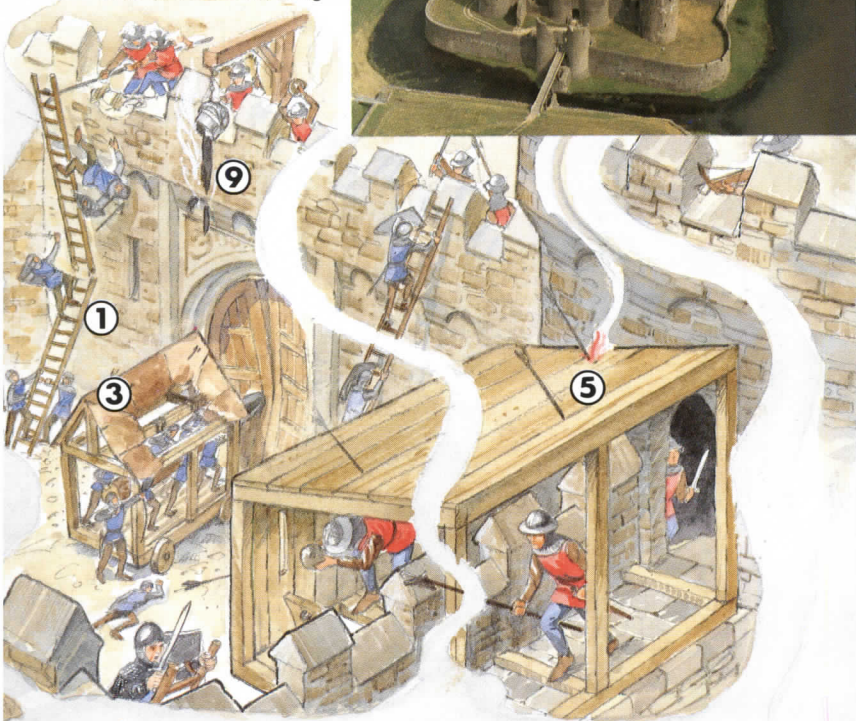
Kings and barons built castles to protect their lands. After defeating the Welsh, Edward I of England built many castles in Wales to control the country. Other castles were built in the north of England as protection against Scottish raiders.

The increasing use of gunpowder and cannon meant that, after 1350, fewer castles were built.





Caerphilly Castle, Glamorgan was begun in 1271. It was surrounded by several moats, artificial lakes and a screen wall 305 m (1000 ft) long



6 MINE: Tunnel dug under wall, filled with wood and then set on fire to make wall collapse

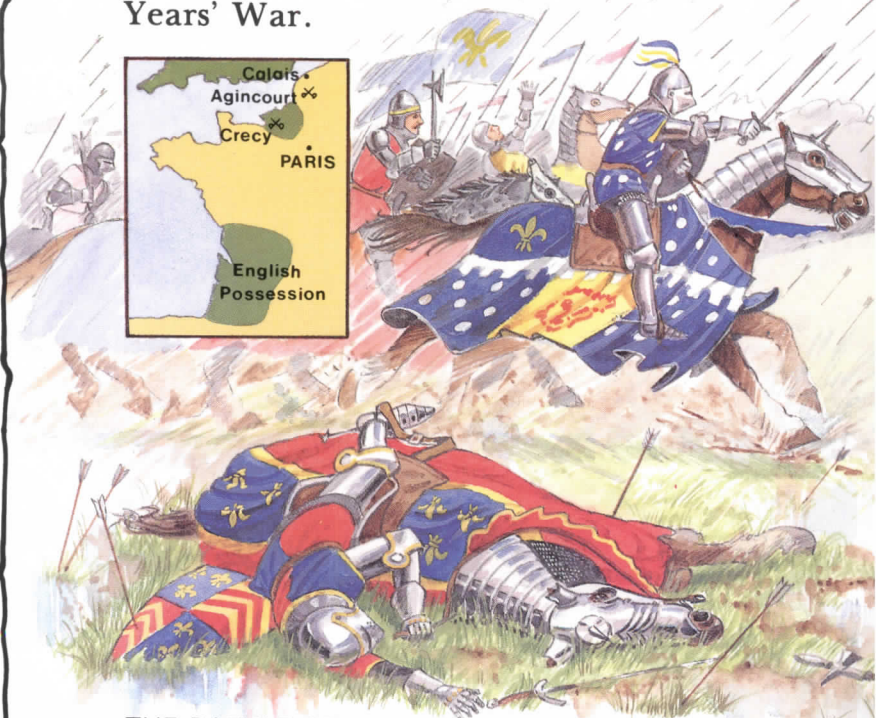
8 ARROW SLITS: Specially shaped to give defenders good view and to give attackers very small target

7 MANGONEL: Twisted ropes provide the power for this catapult to hurl stones

9 HOT PITCH, OIL, WATER or SAND (which got into an attacker's armour and made him itch) were poured down

## The Hundred Years' War

During the Middle Ages, parts of France were ruled by the English and parts by the French. Each side wanted the land owned by the other. The war which broke out between them in 1337 lasted until 1453 and is known as the Hundred Years' War.

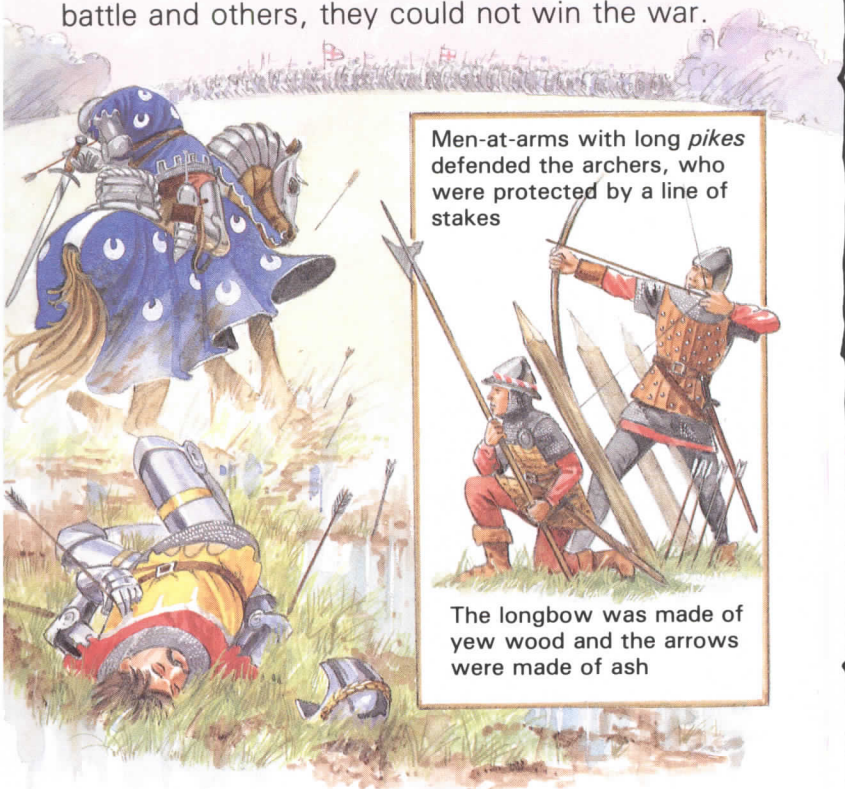


### THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

The battle took place on 25th October 1415. The French had high hopes of winning. Reports said they had 50,000 men whilst the English, led by Henry V, had only 6,000.

The French had chosen the site carefully but as their first line of attack charged, they were caught in a field of mud caused by rain the night before.

It was the skill of the archers that won the battle. Their steel-tipped arrows could kill an armoured knight at two hundred paces. A skilled archer could fire twelve arrows a minute. The battle lasted for nearly three hours. Although the English won this great battle and others, they could not win the war.



Men-at-arms with long *pikes* defended the archers, who were protected by a line of stakes

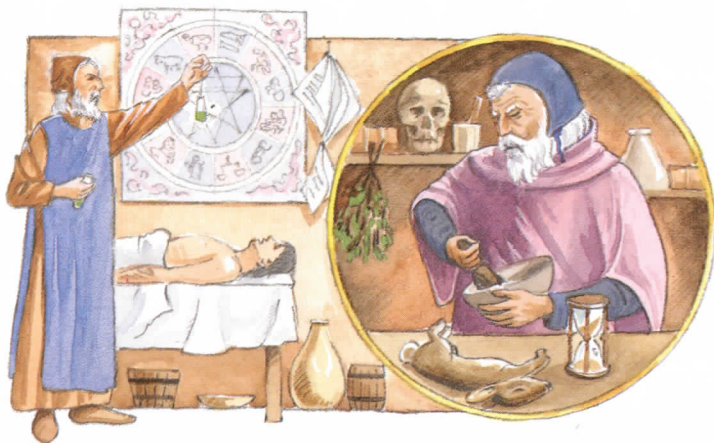
The longbow was made of yew wood and the arrows were made of ash



## Medicine

People in the Middle Ages did not live as long as people do today. Most died before the age of fifty. Doctors were not allowed to cut up dead people to find out what caused disease, so they knew little about curing sickness.

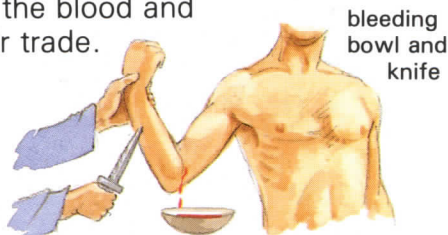
Doctors believed that illness was often caused by 'badness' in the blood. Sometimes they would cut a vein to let some of this 'bad' blood out.



*Physicians* used astrological charts, herbs, spells and charms as cures. Some prepared ointments made from animal fat, blood or dung. Most of their cures were useless.



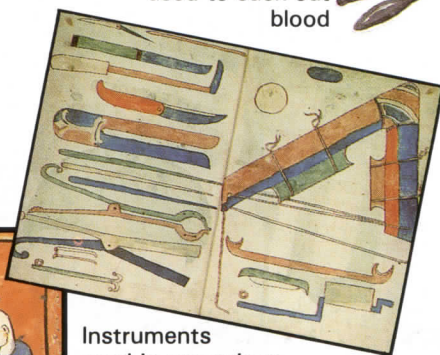
*Surgeons* were barbers who also pulled out teeth and did small operations. Their shops had red and white striped poles outside to show the blood and bandages of their trade.



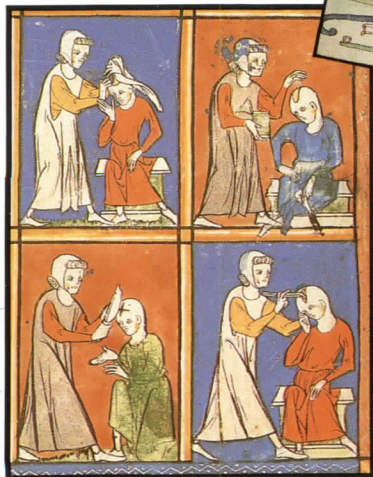
Worms called leeches were used to suck out blood



A page from a book of herbal cures



Instruments used in operations



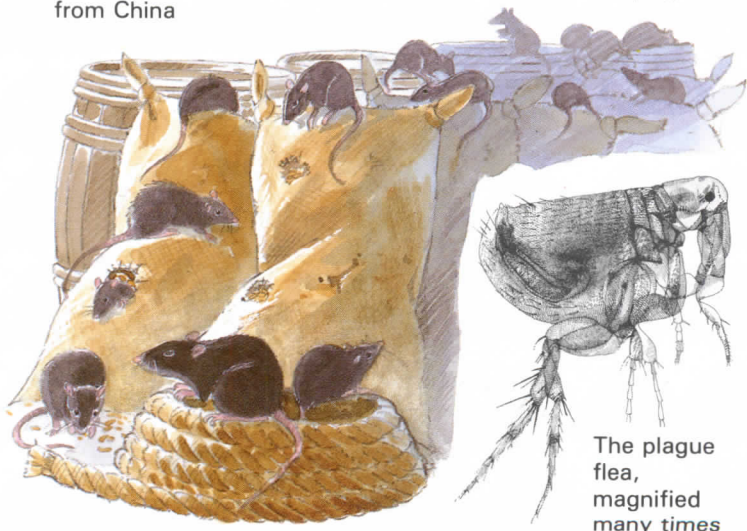
A manuscript from the 13th century showing a medieval brain operation.

*Anaesthetics* were unknown, so this patient would have suffered terrible pain and probably died soon after

## The Black Death

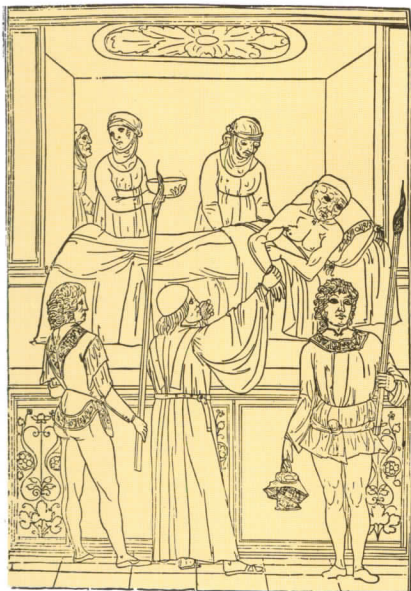
In 1348, a terrible plague reached England. It came from China, carried by the fleas which lived on black rats. People bitten by these fleas developed lumps as big as apples in their armpits, followed by the red and black spots which gave the disease its name, the Black Death.

Black rats lived in the holds of ships and carried the plague from China



Doctors did not understand what caused the Black Death, and there was no cure. Within two years the plague had killed one-third of the population.





Doctors wore outfits like this to protect themselves. The beak was stuffed with herbs to filter the air



A physician, attending a Black Death patient, holds a scented pomander to his nose

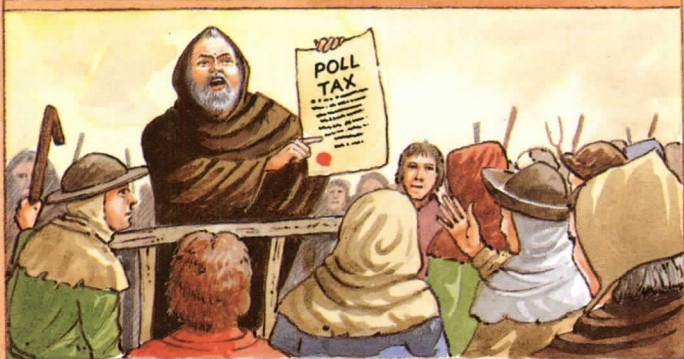
The dead were collected on carts and buried together in large graves



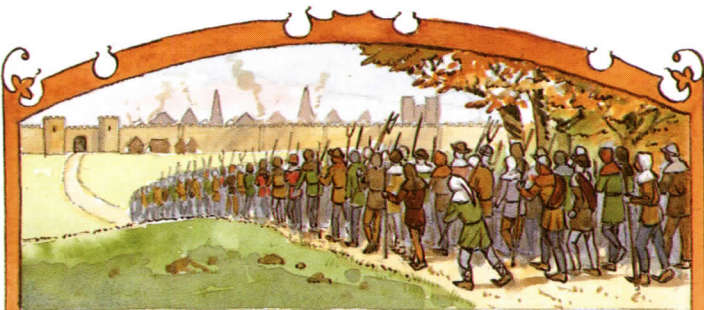
## THE PEASANTS' REVOLT



- 1 After the Black Death there were fewer peasants to farm the land. The overworked survivors grew to hate their manor duties. The peasants wanted to be paid wages and to be free to leave the manor. They were angry when a law was passed to stop this.



- 2 In 1381, King Richard II brought in a poll tax to pay for the war against France. Everyone over the age of fifteen, rich or poor, had to pay one shilling (5p), a large sum of money in those days.



- 3 The peasants attacked their lords. In 1381, John Ball, a poor priest, encouraged the men of Kent to march to London to try to get higher wages and their freedom. Young King Richard, who was only fourteen at the time, met the peasants. Their leader, Wat Tyler, was killed by the Lord Mayor of London.



- 4 The king promised to help, but when the peasants returned home, their leaders were hanged. No more poll taxes were introduced and in time wages began to rise.



## What people wore

Poor people wore cheap, rough, woollen clothes. Rich people wore finer woollen clothes decorated with fur and jewellery.

1300-1400



People wore wooden clogs to keep their feet out of the mud



Shoes were made of thick cloth, leather or velvet

Fashions for wealthy people changed a great deal during the Middle Ages. Towards the end of the period people were richer, so they bought better clothes with more decoration such as embroidery and fur trimmings. Women's hats and hairstyles became very grand. Townspeople copied the styles of the rich, but they used cheaper materials.

1400-1485

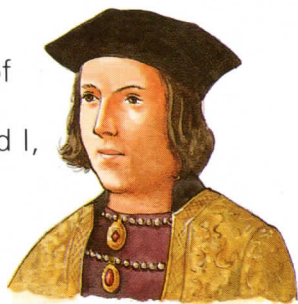


## People at the end of the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages, which came to an end in 1485, were times of great change.

**THE KING:** During the period, most kings had problems in ruling the country because of challenges by rich and powerful barons. Only Edward I, Edward III, Henry V and Edward IV were really successful in controlling them.

EDWARD IV



**THOSE WHO FOUGHT:** By 1485, which marked the end of the Wars of the Roses, the barons owned huge areas of England and many had become powerful, with large armies.

By the age of 21, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick was one of the richest men in England. He was the most powerful baron in the country and had his own private army.

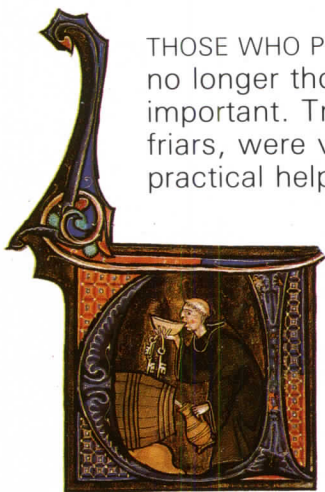
He supported his cousin, the Yorkist King Edward IV, during the Wars of the Roses. But his downfall came when he changed sides for the Lancastrians. He was killed at the Battle of Barnet in 1471



RICHARD NEVILLE



**THOSE WHO PRAYED:** By 1485, people no longer thought monasteries were important. Travelling preachers, called friars, were very popular and gave practical help to villagers.



People criticised the monks for being greedy – as this picture of a monk drinking wine suggests

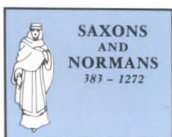
**THOSE WHO WORKED:** By 1485, the Black Death and other diseases meant that there were fewer peasants. The surviving peasants had fewer manor duties and most were paid wages. Towns had become more important because of the wool and cloth trade. This brought wealth to the merchants and to the free labourers, or artisans, who wove the wool and made other goods.



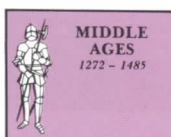
Lavenham guildhall was built by the powerful wool guild



**ROMANS**  
700BC – AD383



**SAXONS  
AND  
NORMANS**  
383 – 1272



**MIDDLE  
AGES**  
1272 – 1485



**TUDORS**  
1485 – 1603

1083 yrs

889 yrs

213 yrs

118 yrs

TIMELINE GUIDE TO A HISTORY OF BRITAIN

## How we know

The events in this book happened over five hundred years ago – so how do we know about them?

Historians use EVIDENCE, rather like detectives do, to piece a story together.

Some BOOKS describing medieval life have survived to this day. One of the best known medieval writers is Geoffrey Chaucer who wrote *The Canterbury Tales*, a long poem about a pilgrimage in which each traveller tells the story of his or her life.

Many books at the time were written by monks.

They decorated their work with small pictures, showing scenes from the lives of medieval people. How many original medieval pictures can you spot in this book?







111 yrs

116 yrs

71 yrs

44 yrs

The Shambles in York,  
one of the most  
famous medieval  
streets in Britain



Archaeologists have  
*excavated* medieval sites and there are many  
towns that have areas and buildings dating  
back to the Middle Ages. There is a list of  
places to visit on page 56.

OBJECTS found by archaeologists are often  
stored in museums. Most of the objects are  
made of metal or stone. We have fewer

objects made  
from cloth or  
wood because  
they rot easily.



Some of these old objects  
seem strange to us. What  
do you think this is? You  
will find the answer  
on page 56

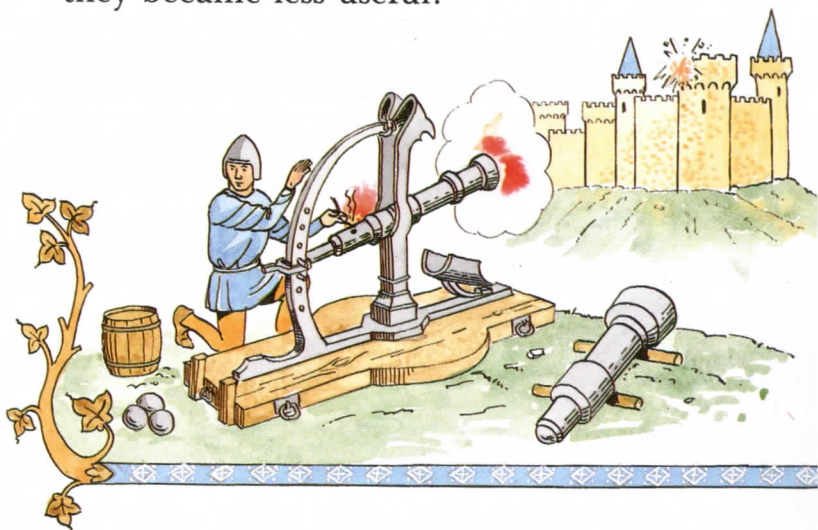


## The legacy of the Middle Ages

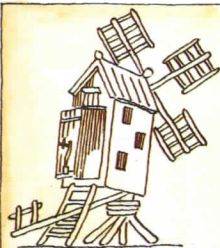
The two most important things invented during the Middle Ages were guns and printing.

William Caxton did not print his first book in England until 1477. By 1485 most books were still written by hand and very expensive, but the invention of printing meant that new ideas could spread more easily.

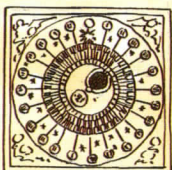
The invention of guns slowly changed the way battles were fought. Castles could be easily battered down by cannon, so they became less useful.



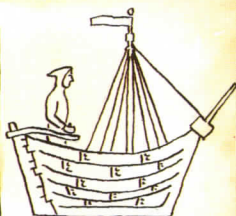
# SOME MEDIEVAL INVENTIONS



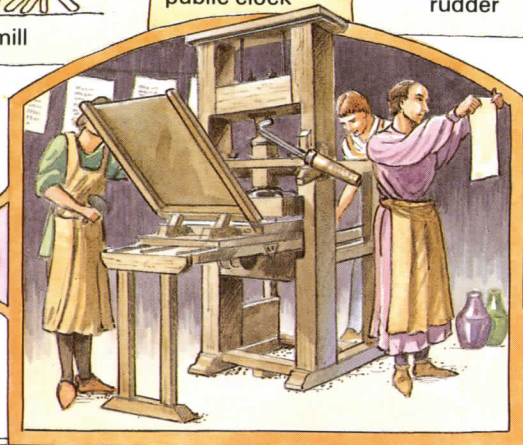
windmill



public clock



rudder



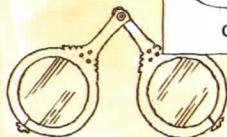
glass mirrors



compass



spinning wheel



spectacles



wheelbarrow



## Glossary

*almoner*: official collector of money for the poor

*anaesthetics*: drugs used before an operation so that the patient feels no pain

*apprentice*: learner of a craft, being trained

*archaeologist*: someone who digs up and studies ancient remains

*artisan*: craftsman; person who works with their hands

*bailiff*: lord of the manor's chief officer

*baron*: a powerful noble

*butler*: servant in charge of wine and drink

*common land*: land on which all the villagers had the right to graze their animals

*excavate*: to dig up ancient remains

*journeyman*: a craftsman who had completed his apprenticeship and so could be paid a daily wage

*jousting*: combat between two knights, on horseback

*marshal*: servant in charge of ceremonies

*masterpiece*: finest piece of work

*noble*: person of high birth; from a good family

*physician*: medical healer

*Pie Powder Court*: a court held at fairs to punish thieves and cheats. The name probably comes from two French words, meaning 'dusty feet', referring to the travellers who came to the fairs

*pike*: long wooden stick with steel or iron head

*pillory*: wooden framework with holes for head and hands – used as punishment

*reeve*: a villager appointed by the bailiff or elected by the other villagers to organise their work

*skillet*: metal pot with feet, for cooking

*stocks*: wooden framework with holes for hands or feet for punishment

*surgeon*: medical person who performs operations

*trencher*: flat piece of wood used as a plate

*winning*: separating the wheat from the chaff



## Index

|                            | <i>page</i>      |                                 | <i>page</i>        |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Agincourt, battle of,      | 5, 38-39         | instruments                     | 41                 |
| armour                     | 32-35            | inventions                      | 52-53              |
| cleaning of                | 33               | knights                         | 28, 32-35, 39      |
| bailiff                    | 9-10             | legacy                          | 52                 |
| Ball, John                 | 4, 45            | longbow                         | 39                 |
| Bannockburn, battle of     | 4, 56            | manor <i>see</i> also barons    | 8-9, 16, 44        |
| banquet                    | 16-17            | medicine                        | 40-43              |
| Barnet, battle of          | 48               | merchants                       | 18, 19, 24, 47, 49 |
| barons (lord of the manor) | 4, 6-8           | monasteries                     | 7, 26-27           |
| 16-17, 32, 36, 48          |                  | monks                           | 7, 26, 49          |
| Becket, Thomas             | 28               | Neville, Earl of Warwick        | 48                 |
| Black Death                | 4, 42-44, 49     | peasants <i>see</i> also houses | 7, 12-15           |
| Bosworth, battle of        | 5                | 18, 44-46, 49                   |                    |
| Bruce, Robert              | 4                | revolt                          | 4, 44-45           |
| cannon                     | 36, 52           | Penshurst Place                 | 15, 56             |
| Canterbury Tales           | 4, 50            | physicians                      | 40, 43             |
| castles                    | 7, 16, 36-37, 52 | Pie Powder Court                | 25                 |
| Caxton, William            | 5, 52            | pilgrims                        | 18, 28-29          |
| Chaucer, Geoffrey          | 4, 50            | pillory                         | 24                 |
| clothes                    | 46-47            | plague flea                     | 42                 |
| Crécy, battle of           | 4, 33            | poll tax                        | 44-45              |
| Didbrook                   | 12               | printing                        | 52-53              |
| doctors                    | 40, 42-43        | Richard II                      | 4, 6, 44-45        |
| dole cupboard              | 27               | Richard III                     | 5, 6               |
| Edward I                   | 4, 36, 48        | ships                           | 19                 |
| Edward II                  | 4, 6             | shoes                           | 13, 21, 46-47      |
| Edward III                 | 4, 6, 30, 48     | shrines                         | 18, 28-29          |
| Edward IV                  | 5, 48            | skillet                         | 13                 |
| Edward V                   | 5, 6             | sport                           | 30-31              |
| Edward, the Black Prince   | 4, 33            | stocks                          | 24                 |
| fairs                      | 24-25            | Stourbridge Fair                | 25                 |
| falcons                    | 14               | surgeons                        | 41                 |
| farming                    | 8, 10-11         | Thaxted guildhall               | 23                 |
| food                       | 13-17            | time chart                      | 4                  |
| football                   | 30               | tournaments                     | 34                 |
| guilds                     | 22-23            | towns                           | 20-21              |
| Henry IV                   | 4, 6             | travelling                      | 18-19              |
| Henry V                    | 5, 38, 48        | Tudors                          | 5                  |
| Henry VI                   | 5, 6             | Tyler, Wat                      | 4, 45              |
| houses - peasants          | 12-13            | Wars of the Roses               | 5, 48              |
| town                       | 20-21            | Wyclif, John                    | 4                  |
| Hundred Years' War         | 5, 38-39         |                                 |                    |
| hunting                    | 14               |                                 |                    |
| inns                       | 18               |                                 |                    |

Some places you can visit to find out more about  
the Middle Ages

#### **CASTLES**

Caerphilly Castle, Glamorgan  
Harlech Castle, Gwynedd  
Stokesay Castle, Shropshire  
Tower of London  
Warwick Castle, Warwick

#### **FORTIFIED MANOR HOUSES**

Markenfield Hall, North Yorkshire

#### **HOUSES**

Haddon Hall, Rowsley, Derbyshire  
Little Moreton Hall, Cheshire  
Penshurst Place, Kent

#### **CHURCHES, CATHEDRALS, MONASTERIES**

Canterbury Cathedral, Kent  
Fountains Abbey, North Yorkshire  
Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire  
Wells Cathedral, Somerset

#### **TOWNS**

Chester, Cheshire  
Conwy, Clwyd  
Lavenham, Suffolk  
Ludlow, Shropshire  
Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear  
York, Yorkshire

#### **BATTLEFIELDS**

Bosworth Field, Leicestershire  
Bannockburn, Central Scotland

#### **MUSEUMS**

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, West Sussex  
Jewry Wall Museum, Leicestershire

The picture on page 51 shows a salting trough, used for  
preserving meat.





**Titles in the Ladybird  
History of Britain series:**

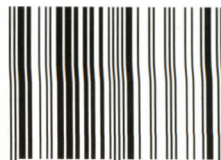
The Romans  
The Saxons and the Normans  
The Middle Ages  
The Tudors  
The Stuarts  
The Georgians  
The Victorians

LADYBIRD and the device of a  
are trademarks of Ladybird Books  
Published by LADYBIRD BOOKS LTD  
Loughborough Leicestershire  
and USA - LADYBIRD BOOKS  
Auburn Maine 04210

Printed in the United Kingdom  
by Ladybird Books Ltd - Loughborough



ISBN 0-7214-3368-5



0 7214 3368 5